

GB-2102

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*That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."
1 Corinthians 2: 9 NTV*

Without a doubt, these words are reflected in 2020. The year started off promising. We began a new decade full of new challenges, fruitful plans and much blessing for the Obra Hispana. We looked forward to meeting in Ft. Worth, TX for our 2020 Experience, "It's Real" to embrace and share in worship with our siblings from National Convocation and NAPAD. The arrival of the pandemic radically changed everything from one day to the next. But this did not stop God's plans.

What our eyes have seen and our ears have heard has been impressive. We have experienced a church surpass herself, pastors leading the church in new directions and towards new horizons. We have also seen the lay church awaken to grow, empower and connect in amazing and new ways.

We understood at the beginning of the pandemic that we would have to respond differently to the needs, but of equal importance, we needed to have a consistent presence and a pastoral accompaniment that would provide care, training, information, inspiration and empowerment. The following programs were developed as part of this response. These programs were in addition to the continuous work of the National Pastor to accompany the Hispanic community in a pastoral role through celebrations, crisis, and other processes in the life of ministry and in collaboration with Regions and other General Ministries, and in the Hispanic Conventions.

PROGRAMS

1. **SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS**- As an initiative to help in the moment of tension in the church with the arrival of Holy Week not being able to meet in person, we launched a live program through Facebook to get closer to each other and feed ourselves through God's word. This is not a common tradition among all the cultures of the Obra Hispana, so it was a great blessing to

experience it together. Reach: 5,300+ in audience, 900+ reactions, comments, etc.

2. **CONTIGO**- This program that has been carried out every Friday at 1pm on Facebook Live, through the Obra Hispana page, and more recently, on our YouTube channel simultaneously. The first program launched on April 17th in response to the pandemic and has been the backbone of strengthened connection across the Church.
 - a. 38 programs in 2020
 - b. Topics: pandemic testimonies, mental health, racism, immigration, children's ministry, how to talk with children about the pandemic, historical dialogue of National Pastors, dealing with death and trauma, testimonies about the work of the church, dialogues with ministries: Week of Compassion, NBA, Pension Fund, DCEF, and Bread for the World, etc.
3. **M> PWR**- In June we launched an empowerment initiative: 30 days of Empowerment, 30 Empowered People, 30 Words that Empower. Twenty-nine individuals shared approximately 10 minute videos about themselves and a thought/reflection on the importance of living an empowered life and empowering others. June 1-29 a daily video was premiered, and on June 30, the National Pastor closed the initiative in a live program. This was a way for us to increase our knowledge of each other and represent our diversity in age, nationality and geography. All the videos are available on our YouTube channel.
4. **CONTINUING EDUCATION**: We had not provided this previously, yet due to concerns of our pastors not being able to complete hours of continuing education for their credentials, we took the initiative to launch this opportunity through the CPOHM. This turned out to be a very powerful tool, even beyond content and learning, because of the way that it helped us build greater connection between each other. Pastors and lay leaders met to continue growing together. 4 courses were offered in 2020, and in 2021 as we continue to work to develop this resource according to the pertinent needs of the Brown Church, and in innovative areas that train us for the new reality that we live.
 - a. Leaders in Times of Crisis- Dr. Samuel Pagan
 - b. The Fruit of the Spirit: The Virtue That Never Dies- Dr. Nestor Gomez
 - c. Adaptive Leadership- Rev. Lori Tapia (*offered in Eng & Span*)
 - d. Cybernetic Church: A new way of being church-Pstr. Horacio Rodriguez
5. **VIRTUAL: God With Us**: We celebrated our Twentieth Biennial Assembly through an online platform in a massive production that was 85% fully live. This Assembly included 8 churches participating in worship and praise from across the country, showing the diversity in worship styles represented in our beloved Obra Hispana. With a group of talented volunteers, it was possible to carry out 2 days of celebration, a business session, workshops, and more. Thanks to our sponsors: NBA, DCEF, Bread for the World (Platinum), and Global Ministries and

Christian Church Foundation (Silver), we were able to send a t-shirt and a mask bag to each registrant. There was no cost for the assembly.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

This year, through collaboration, funds from the CPOHM, Pension Fund, Week of Compassion and NBA, provided more than \$325,000 to Hispanic Ministries and families. The CPOHM directly distributed funds to pastors, churches and church members to help in times of illness and different crises. Through a collaboration with the Ministry of the Pension Fund, we received \$63,750 to be able to distribute funds to our undocumented Pastors that were not going to qualify for the stimulus and in this way create more equity. There were 51 recipients between pastors and associate / assistant pastors.

IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

In our collaboration that supports the position of an Immigration Response Specialist, held by Valeria Bejar, the year also saw much fruit sprout. An initiative called IWOBS, which stands for Immigrant-led, Weekly Online Bible Study, was launched. This brought in itself two purposes: 1) that among the immigrant community there would be a platform to study the Word of God from an immigrant lens, context, and languages, 2) to open awareness for the non-immigrant community by participating in studies and learning from the lens and context of an immigrant, expanding understanding and strengthening relationships to increase support for this community.

Unfortunately, this position reached its conclusion on December 31, 2020.

We are entering a new era and what we do today will help us shape the tomorrow we desire for our vitality as the Body of Christ, the Church Universal, the well-being of our Obra Hispana and communities, and for the honor and glory of God. We ended 2020 in the black, a strong declaration of faith, hope and commitment of the Obra Hispana, and we trust that God continues to sustain and strengthen us every step of the way into what is to come. God is always doing something new, can't you perceive it?

In Christ and for Christ.



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